

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the application:

LISTING OF CLAIMS:

1-7 (cancelled)

8. (currently amended): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:
- at least one outer tube;
 - an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;
 - a ~~first~~ limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;
 - an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;
 - a ~~second~~ limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw;
 - a spreading element, radially spreadable and having a non-threaded bore defining an single and inner cone, said inner cone opening towards said end of said inner tube, said spreading element disposed between said ~~first~~ limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube and said ~~second~~ limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw such that the spreading element can move axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof; and
 - an axially moveable interior element having an outer cone structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with said inner cone of said spreading element, said interior element having an internal threaded bore cooperating with said adjusting screw,
 - wherein said spreading element and said interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported at axially said end of said inner tube, said spreading device for clamping said inner tube within said outer tube.
9. (previously presented): The pole of claim 8, wherein the pole is a ski or a walking stick.

10. (currently amended): ~~The adjustable-length pole of claim 8~~ An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;

an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw;

a spreading element, radially spreadable and having a non-threaded bore defining an single and inner cone, said inner cone opening towards said end of said inner tube, said spreading element disposed between said limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube and said limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw such that the spreading element can move axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof; and an axially moveable interior element having an outer cone structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with said inner cone of said spreading element, said interior element having an internal threaded bore cooperating with said adjusting screw,

wherein said spreading element and said interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported at axially said end of said inner tube, said spreading device for clamping said inner tube within said outer tube, and

wherein said spreading element is configured as a pot, the base of which is penetrated by a free end area of said adjusting screw, facing away from said inner tube.

11. (previously presented): The adjustable-length pole of claim 8, wherein said spreading element comprises a cylindrical shoulder having a smaller exterior diameter than the base of said spreading element, and facing said inner tube, said shoulder being axially guidable by a guide piece attached to a limit stop surface at the end of the inner tube facing the spreading element,

12. (currently amended): The adjustable-length pole of claim 8, wherein said second limit stop disposed on a free end of said adjusting screw is a cap that is axially secured at said free end of said adjusting screw after said spreading element has been set in place.

13. (withdrawn-currently amended): The adjustable-length pole of claim 8, wherein said second limit stop disposed on a free end of said adjusting screw is formed by a head that is molded onto said free end of said adjusting screw, with said spreading element having a peripheral slot that extends along an entire axial length of said spreading element.

14. (withdrawn-currently amended): The adjustable-length pole of claim 11, wherein said spreading device has a plug that accommodates said adjusting screw in an axial and rotationally fixed manner, said plug being supported axially and in a rotationally fixed manner in said inner tube and defining said first limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube, said plug having an axially protruding guide member cooperating with said cylindrical shoulder of said spreading element.

15. (currently amended): ~~The adjustable-length pole of claim 8~~ An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;

an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw;

a spreading element, radially spreadable and having a non-threaded bore defining an single and inner cone, said inner cone opening towards said end of said inner tube, said spreading element disposed between said limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube and said limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw such that the spreading element can move axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof; and

an axially moveable interior element having an outer cone structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with said inner cone of said spreading element, said interior element having an internal threaded bore cooperating with said adjusting screw,

wherein said spreading element and said interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported at axially said end of said inner tube, said spreading device for clamping said inner tube within said outer tube, and,

wherein said interior element has one or more radially protruding fins, which are guided in axial slots of said spreading element.

16. (new): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;

an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw;

a spreading element, radially spreadable, having a non-threaded bore defining an single and inner cone, said inner cone opening towards said end of said inner tube, said spreading element disposed between said limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube and said limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw such that the spreading element can move axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof; and

an axially moveable interior element having an outer cone structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with said inner cone of said spreading element, said interior element having an internal threaded bore cooperating with said adjusting screw,

wherein said spreading element and said interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported at axially said end of said inner tube, said spreading device for clamping said inner tube within said outer tube,

wherein said spreading element is configured as a pot, the base of which is penetrated by a free end area of said adjusting screw, facing away from said inner tube, and

wherein said interior element has one or more radially protruding fins, which are guided in axial slots of said spreading element.

17 (new): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:

at least one outer tube;

an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;

a limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;

an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;

a limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw;

a spreading element, radially spreadable and having a non-threaded bore defining an single and inner cone, said inner cone opening towards said end of said inner tube, said spreading element disposed between said limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube and said limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw such that the spreading element can move axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof; and

an axially moveable interior element having an outer cone structured, dimensioned, and disposed for cooperation with said inner cone of said spreading element in that by rotating said inner tube with respect to said outer tube said interior element is moved away from said inner tube and into said spreading element spreading it apart radially against the interior circumference of the outer tube, said interior element having an internal threaded bore cooperating with said adjusting screw,

wherein said spreading element and said interior element cooperate to form a spreading device supported at axially said end of said inner tube, said spreading device for clamping said inner tube within said outer tube.

18. (new): An adjustable-length pole, the pole comprising:
- an outer tube;
 - an inner tube structured and dimensioned for insertion into said outer tube in a telescoping fashion for adjusting a length of the pole;
 - a limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube;
 - an adjusting screw axially oriented within said outer tube and supported in a rotationally fixed manner on said end of said inner tube;
 - a limit stop disposed on the free end of said adjusting screw; and
 - a spreading device that comprises (1) an interior portion that is threaded for engagement with said adjusting screw and (2) a radially spreadable portion that (a) is not threaded and (b) is separated from said limit stop disposed at an end of said inner tube by a pre-established slight distance such that said spreader is movable axially within narrow limits without rotation thereof in response to an axial force forcing the inner tube further into the outer tube, and (c) in response to said axial movement applies a radial force against an inner surface of said outer tube.